

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 10, 13-16 and 18-24 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 7, 10, 21, 23 and 24 are amended and claim 22 is deleted.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's favorable actions with respect to many of the rejections and objections addressed in Applicant's previous Response of July 7, 2003. Applicant makes following remarks concerning the remaining objections and rejections contained in the final Action of September 16, 2003.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In paragraphs 13 and 14 (as well as 7-12) of the Office Action indicate that claims 1-3, 5-6, 10, 14-15 and 18-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ballard (U.S. 4,133,340). With this response, independent claims 1, 10, and 21 are amended to further distinguish Applicant's invention from Ballard. In claim 1, the further structure of a first fluid receptacle is claimed as being disposed on the base and operably connected to the first substantially isolated fluid circuit. Also, a common fluid receptacle is disposed in a basin fluidly connected to the second fluid circuit. Applicant submits that this additional structure is supported in the Specification by at least Figures 15 and 16 and accompanying description in the Specification. Applicant submits that Ballard only teaches a common fluid receptacle in communication with all fluid circuits.

Claim 21 is amended to recite the additional structure of a first substantially isolated fluid receptacle and a common fluid receptacle similar to how claim 1 is amended. Therefore, Applicant submits that claims 1 and 21 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 2 and 7 were amended only reflect the identification of the first substantially isolated fluid circuit terminology from claim 1. Applicant submits that claims 2-3 and 5-6 are in condition for allowance by virtue of their dependence on now allowable independent claim 1.

Rejected independent claim 22 has been cancelled by the present amendment and dependent claims 23 and 24 reformed into independent form to include all limitations of base

claim 22. Paragraph 18 of the Office Action indicated that such amendment to claims 23 and 24 would place them in allowable form. The Applicant submits that this amendment is not narrowing because it merely captures the subject matter indicated as allowable by the Examiner and the added language was always part of claims 23 and 24 by virtue of their dependent status on claim 22.

Claim 10 is amended in the present Response to positively recite both a container cleaning assembly and a door cleaning assembly disposed within the base so as to allow the apparatus to clean a door and a wafer carrier simultaneously. Applicant submits that Ballard does not teach such a device. Applicant notes that the reference in Ballard's specification to upper or lid section 18 appears to refer to a portion of the apparatus' housing. See e.g. Figure 1. This is not a door cleaning assembly. Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 10, as amended is in condition for allowance. Further, claims 14-15 and 18-20 are now believed to be in condition for allowance by virtue of their dependence on allowable claim 10.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In paragraphs 15-17 of the Office Action, claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ballard in view of Kraft et al. (U.S. 4,957,120). Applicant submits that claim 4 is in condition for allowance by virtue of its dependency on allowable claim 1. Moreover, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection because both Kraft and Ballard are non analogous subject matter and therefore there is no motivation to combine these references.

Ballard, as Applicant understands it, discloses a cleaning machine for cleaning the inside and outside of an apparatus using a cleaning fluid. In contrast, Kraft discloses an apparatus for removing fluid from an article after it has already been cleaned. See background discussions in columns 1 and 2 of Kraft. Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art of cleaning semiconductor wafer carriers would not have been motivated to combine the teachings of Ballard and Kraft. Also, Applicant notes that Kraft, like Ballard teaches only the use of a common fluid receptacle.

Therefore, for all of the above reasons, Applicant submits that claim 4 is in condition for allowance.

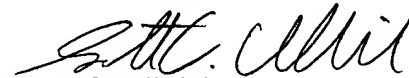
Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that claims 7, 13, 16, 18 and 23-24 contain allowable subject matter and are merely objected as being dependent on a rejected base claim. Applicant wishes to note that claim 18 is inconsistently identified in the Office Action Summary as being rejected. Applicant also notes that in paragraph 14, claim 18 is again indicated as being rejected under 102(b) in view of Ballard. Applicant merely wishes to note this discrepancy for the Examiner's consideration and possible clarification for the record. Under either the rejected or objected scenario, Applicant submits that claim 18 is in condition for allowance by virtue of its dependency on now allowable claim 10.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution of this Application

Respectfully submitted,



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